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ABSTRACT

A 1981 Wingspread conference on the implications of the new scholarship on women for the traditional goals and assumptions of liberal education also addresses possibilities and imperatives for curricular and institutional change. After an introduction by Anne Fuller, papers by three women's studies scholars are presented. "Feminist Scholarship--The Extent of the Revolution" (Florence Howe) suggests that the study of women is not only an academic question but a question of allowing women images of achievement and aspiration comparable to those the curriculum has generally afforded at least to white middle-class males. "A Feminist Critique of the Liberal Arts" (Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich) proposes that schools are still educating people in a system that grew out of a hierarchical and partial vision of what humanity is. "The Challenges of Women's History" (Gerda Lerner) suggests that women's history challenges the traditional periodization of history and indicates a need for a redefinition of categories and values. Lastly, conference recommendations for institutions, administrators, education associations, and disciplinary groups are also presented. Among the conclusions are: (1) liberal education is "illiberal" if it does not take adequate account of the values, accomplishments, lives, and perspectives of half the human race; (2) research on women integrates new information into the curriculum to provide a more complete understanding of human experience; and (3) a new feminist scholarship, which examines a topic or discipline from the points of view of both men and women, can change assumptions, values, and methodologies of many areas of study. A list of participants and planning committee members is appended. (SW)

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Liberal Education and the New Scholarship on Women

Issues and Constraints in Institutional Change

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A Report of the Wingspread Conference

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Liberal Education and the New Scholarship on Women

Issues and Constraints in Institutional Change

A Report of the
Wingspread Conference

Wingspread Conference Center
Racine, Wisconsin
October 22-24, 1981

Sponsored by the

Association of American Colleges

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Preface

This report resulted from a three-day conference on the theme "Liberal Education and the New Scholarship on Women: Issues and Constraints in Institutional Change," held on October 22-24, 1981 at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. It was sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and generously supported by grants from the Ford Foundation and the Lilly Endowment. The conference brought together, for the first time under the auspices of a national education association, college and university administrators and practitioners of women's studies and feminist scholarship.

The purpose of the conference was two-fold: First, to consider the implications of the new scholarship on women for the traditional goals and assumptions of liberal education; and second, to challenge the educational community to seriously consider the resulting possibilities and imperatives for curricular and institutional change. While the conference did not deal with issues of race and class directly, both the Association and the participants acknowledge the importance of these issues. Conference participants recognized the debt which the new scholarship on women owes to prior and continuing black and ethnic studies. These studies, similarly, pose important challenges to the academy's assumptions concerning the meaning of humane and liberal learning. The conference took the position that the new scholarship should be inclusive of women of all races and castes.

The conference stemmed from the Association of American Colleges' continuing mission to reexamine and reinterpret the nature and purpose of liberal education. The conference brought together fifty representatives from several foundations and from public and private institutions of higher learning from across the country. Institutional representatives included presidents, chancellors, chief academic officers, and faculty persons from centers for the sponsorship of the new teaching and research. A list of all participants is included at the end of this report.

Three women's studies scholars presented the feature addresses: Florence Howe, founder and president of the Feminist Press and professor of American Studies at the State University of

New York College at Old Westbury; Elizabeth K. Minnich, professor of philosophy and former dean at the Union's Graduate School and the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities/East; and Gerda Lerner, Robinson-Edwards Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and president of the Organization of American Historians. Their speeches follow.

Conferees met in small groups to discuss the implications of the new research for the academy's assumptions with regard to goals, curricula, and institutional structures. In a final plenary session, participants moved to validate the recommendations to institutions, administrators, disciplinary groups, and education associations. This report concludes with the participants' policy recommendations for the higher education community.

Acknowledgements

The idea for this conference grew from my time as chair and immediate past chair of the Association of American Colleges from 1979 to 1981. The conference owes a great deal to its excellent planning committee: Louis Brakeman, provost of Denison University; Paula Goldsmid, dean of Scripps College; Margaret McIntosh, director of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women; Francis Oakley, dean of Williams College; Elaine Reuben, former coordinator of the National Women's Studies Association; Lewis Salter, president of Wabash College; and Ruth Schmidt, provost of Wheaton College. Jean Walton, coordinator of women's studies for the Claremont Colleges, and Bernice R. Sandler, director of AAC's Project on the Status and Education of Women, assisted with the conference design.

In addition to the featured speakers, whose addresses appear in this report, several other persons gave presentations. I would like to thank the following speakers for their contributions to the conference: Louis Brakeman; Paula Goldsmid; Margaret McIntosh; David Potter, dean of Haverford College; Margaret Preska, president of Mankato State College; Ruth Schmidt; Jean Walton; and Edward Weidner, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

To all these persons; to Mark Curtis, AAC president; and especially, to William R. O'Connell, Jr., AAC vice president, and his staff, I am most grateful.

Anne H. Fuller
February 1982
Claremont, CA

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Introduction

Anne Fuller

The conventional understanding of "women's studies" among academic administrators has often been distorted and frequently based on little knowledge.

Too few college and university presidents and deans have understood the new scholarship on women as an intellectual pursuit; hence they have not grasped its importance for the programs in general and liberal education which their institutions offer. One might argue that deans and presidents ought to have kept up with the considerable intellectual excitement generated by this new scholarship in the past dozen years, but demands on administrators' time are many, and complex resistances remain. In 1975 Professor Catharine Stimpson, then of Barnard College and now of Rutgers University, humorously, yet distressingly, characterized attitudes which still prevail on many campuses:

> Doubt tend to surface rhetorically as a mixture of pejorative comment and question. . . . 'Women's studies is female chauvinism. Aren't they going to study men?' . . .'Women's studies is absurd. What's next? A Department of Male Studies?' . . . 'Women's studies is empty. Do they do anything besides scratch each other's consciousness?'
> ("The New Feminism and Women's Studies," in *Women on Campus: the Unfinished Liberation*, from the eds. of *Change*, N.Y., 1975, p. 82)

Professor Stimpson contends that all three sets of remarks betray ignorance. The first two stem from a false assumption that practitioners of women's studies "simply invert the habits of the past . . . [and seek to] exclude the sex that once excluded them." The third remark, in Professor Stimpson's words, "ignores the solid accomplishment of women's studies and dismisses the respectable possibility that a liberal arts education might expand consciousness, personal and public."

It is important to indicate briefly some of the ways in which women's studies and the new feminist scholarship are leading to reconsideration of the methods and content, and hence of accepted ends, of liberal education. Professor Gerda Lerner, Robin-

son Edwards Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and current president of the Organization of American Historians, indicates something of the potential significance of the new scholarship when she writes of the emerging field of women's history in *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History*:

> "Contribution" history is an important stage in the creation of a true history of women . . . but it is well to keep the limitations of such inquiry in mind. When all is said and done, what we have mostly done in writing contribution history is to describe what men in the past . . . thought women should be. This is just another way of saying that historians of women's history have so far used a traditional framework. Essentially, they have applied questions from traditional history to women, and tried to fit women's past into the empty spaces of historical scholarship. The limitation of such work is that it deals with women in male-defined society and tries to fit them into the categories and value systems which consider *man* the measure of significance. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 149-150)

"The key to understanding women's history," Professor Lerner continues, "is in accepting—painful though that may be—that it is the history of the *majority* of humankind." In rewriting history inclusive of women, wholly new categories are needed in addition to the general categories by which historians organize their material. Professor Lerner suggests that when such categories as "sexuality, reproduction, the link between child-bearing and child-rearing; role indoctrination; sexual values and myths; [and] female consciousness" are added, we will have "not a single framework for dealing with women in history, but new questions to all of history" (ibid., p. 282).

The implications of Professor Lerner's work for the study and writing of history are clearly considerable. Another historian, Professor Joan Kelly-Gadol of New York University, has, moreover, persuasively questioned the assumptions by which history has been periodized, by demonstrating that "the Renaissance" is a category relative only to male experience, and that women knew none such ("The Social Relation Of The Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History," *Signs*, 1 (1976), 809-823). In another field, Professor Carol Gilligan, of the Harvard University psychology faculty, has demonstrated persuasively that the psycho-moral development of women is not lesser or incomplete because it chooses interdependence grounded in contextual principles of care and responsibility, relationship and non-violence rather than Kohlberg's final category for male

development to do with autonomy grounded in universal and abstract moral principles ("In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and Morality," *Harvard Educational Review*, 47 (1977), 481-517). The late Professor Michelle Rosaldo and her colleagues in anthropology at Stanford have shown that power, competitiveness, and dominance may be seen as male categories, and that women in all cultures have acted from different but equally significant and socially effective values of their own (*Women, Culture, and Society*, Stanford University Press, 1974).

Such a list of significant findings could go on nearly indefinitely. Yet it should be clear even from the brief list above that the task of reformulating academic studies inclusive of the heretofore invisible half of humankind will be considerable, not only in regard to assumptions and methodologies of the disciplines, but also in regard to the academy's assumptions about and formulations of the goals of liberal education. As an exercise in truth-seeking and in freeing persons for the wider, more just view, for instance, the value of the new scholarship on women is obvious; but it is unformulated. Moreover, the possibilities for freeing potentiality and creativity, and for informing and re-forming students' value-schemes, powers of judgment, capacities for decision-making, and ability to examine hitherto unexamined assumptions are perceptible; but they have scarcely been plumbed. The new scholarship lays challenges to other assumed commitments of liberal learning, for instance the commitment to "scholarly objectivity" and generic "excellence," the teaching of critical thinking and the sharpening of analytical tools, and the preparation of persons for public leadership and civic responsibility. Insofar as these commitments apparently reflect peculiarly male values, their balancing by newly understood countervaling female values becomes a matter of some urgency for an educational mode which claims to free both male and female students for the development of a more complete humanity. It is not a question of one or other set of values, but of reformulating and teaching both.

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In 1980, aware that it was high time such matters received the academy's attention, the Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges asked the staff to seek an opportunity to begin public discussion of the import of the new scholarship on women with college and university administrators who might not otherwise, or as easily, come to understand its significance. Aware that

in many institutions the burden of validating the findings of this new scholarship is carried by young, professionally vulnerable faculty persons who are at a disadvantage regarding tenure, it was the Association's conviction that their efforts deserve the firm intellectual grasp of the top administrators of their campuses. Sensitive to the fact of the faculty's rightful role in determining curriculum, the Association knew nonetheless that institutional administrators hold positions of special responsibility with regard to realigning budgetary priorities, interpreting institutional goals and mission to multiple constituencies, ensuring for scholars involved in the new research the full protections of academic freedom, and creating a climate in which attitudinal and curricular changes and changes in the rewards system become possible. Hence the Association's sponsorship of the conference in October 1981.

In the perceptions of the participants, the conference was a high success, its replication hoped for and recommended. One final point is to be borne in mind. This was not a political conference urging that women be given not only equal political and economic opportunity alongside men, but also equal attention and coverage in the classroom. This was not a conference on equity theory. The conference attempted more difficult ends. It asked conferees to participate in a work of intellect and imagination, to attempt the difficult act of conceiving recommendations whose fulfillment would issue in an idea for liberal education entailing considerable change of assumptions, aims, and institutional means. A venture of some daring and exhilaration, this Wingspread conference held promise of aiding not only the redesign of curricula and institutional structures, but also the redesigning of knowledge and the academy's approach to truth itself. It is a task well begun, as the following papers and recommendations make abundantly clear.

Feminist Scholarship—The Extent of the Revolution

Florence Howe

When I went to college in the forties, I could not have imagined questioning the teacher, the syllabus, or the texts I was given to read. I was at Hunter College, in those days still a women's college, with a high percentage of women faculty, even a few women administrators. None of these persons, however, seemed concerned about the fact that the entire curriculum taught women that their education would carry them into domesticity. If they were to work, it would be because they had to and only in the few fields open to them: school teaching, social work, the library, or, if they were exceptional, teaching on a women's college campus. The message of the curriculum was, in brief: men achieve and work; women love and marry. The twin message of love and marriage, I should add, was present in sociology and literature; elsewhere, women were almost entirely absent, except for the traditional nudes painted by scores of male artists one viewed in art history.

In the forties, I thought nothing was wrong with this portrait of the world. And in the fifties, when I proved one of the exceptions and went on to graduate school, the curricular portrait extended itself without any changes, though I went from Hunter to Smith and then to the University of Wisconsin, where I taught and studied for the first time in an obviously male world. The garment of my studies, their cloth and design, never varied. When I began to teach in 1960—as expected, at a women's college—I taught what I had been taught: the male-centered curriculum, male writers, male perspectives, about mainly male worlds—bear-hunting and whales and priest-ridden young men, for example, not birthing, mothering, not even schoolteaching. When I was asked to design the required sophomore survey in British literature, I chose not a single work by a woman writer, nor did I include a work by a male writer that contained a strong and sympathetic female character. I was not only without consciousness of

gender; I had accepted that male-centered world as "universal." The question of where I was located in that world—had anyone asked it of me—would have been puzzling or irrelevant.

At Goucher College, where I began teaching in 1960, I was not only not interested in gender; I was, from the first, regretful that *it was* a women's college, and I supported those who wanted to see that campus a coeducational one, arguing that it was not "healthy" for women to be isolated from men. If the "real" world, the "public" world, was male, women could only gain access to it through being at least in the presence of those who could enter it. You know those arguments. I didn't know it then, but those arguments also reflected the homophobic, male-centered curriculum I had been studying and teaching without consciousness, and of course without understanding and knowledge therefore. A literary example makes the point clearly.

In the sixties, I enjoyed reading D. H. Lawrence with students, and I had not yet noticed a pattern in his treatment of women. Many of his stories and novels open with women in close relationships—blood sisters, for example, or simply very close friends—and conclude with the women estranged, divided by men and/or marriage. From Lawrence's point of view, a man needs other men—and friendships should be formed between them; a woman needs only the man she loves, and friendships with women can only get in the way of that male-female relationship, or, worse, lead to lesbian relationships. Thus men can move easily from the world of men and male relationships into a relationship with a single woman; women on the other hand need to avoid the company of women (Lawrence cannot conceive of a woman's world), and live mainly within a relationship with a single man, with whom it is possible to have both a sexual and an intellectual relationship. The Laurentian pattern is not unique to him, of course, but a reflection of his social milieu. And perhaps I should add at once, that compared with such other visions of women as T. S. Eliot's, or Hemingway's or Fitzgerald's, Lawrence's at least allows women some intellect, some warmth, some human form. But this form is shaped by a male vision that precludes women loving women, or even managing deep and life-lasting friendships with women, in addition to, or even more important than, a heterosexual relationship.

At Goucher, my friends were male faculty members: how could I feel anything but concern that my students did not have the opportunity to form friendships with young men? At Goucher, especially in the composition classes I taught three times

a year, something else began to puzzle, then concern me. These students were bright, they came in with high scores and good skills, and yet their writing was bland, empty of conviction, opinion, idea. In conference, they were directionless, without ambition. They were without vocation; even those who had arrived with a vocational goal had lost it within the first quarter of college life. They were at Goucher because their parents wanted them in a safe place between the years of high school and the years of marriage, and in a safe place that would allow them to marry well—they could choose from Annapolis or the Hopkins. And in the students' own words, they saw the usefulness of their liberal arts education as preparation for entertaining their husbands' friends, clients, or business associates. Those of you who know Swift's eighteenth century prescription for women's education—that it was necessary for women who wished to keep their husbands' interest beyond the years of youthful beauty—understand that these Goucher students had leaped to a new depth: they were going to prove useful to their husbands' achievement in a postindustrial world, by serving cultured conversation about the arts and politics along with the salad and *hors d'oeuvres*.

By the fall of 1964, and for reasons that had nothing to do with the women's movement, I was teaching composition through the use of literature by and about women, though to keep the peace, I always included Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. Perhaps you remember the conclusion of that novel: Paul Morel is talking with Miriam—they had been young lovers together—about her current life. He asks whether she is in love, and she says she is teaching. He voices Lawrence's view that for a man work is sufficient; for a woman, not so. A woman to be complete must have love; work for women is insufficient. Following this segment of the course, my students talked one day about their views of work, and an intrepid freshman who had been tutoring in Baltimore's black ghetto offered the view that she *enjoyed* such work, and that she planned to enjoy work the rest of her days. I was as surprised as the rest of the class to hear this view expressed, and asked others in the small group of fifteen how they felt about the expressed view. Some students thought the young woman couldn't have been doing her job if she had "enjoyed" herself, since work was not supposed to be enjoyable. Others thought it was morally wrong to "enjoy" such work, since the point of it was altruistic—you were supposed to be thinking only of helping others. Unmentioned in the discussion that followed were two elements important even to my gender-unconscious life: the need

to earn money through working and so to be self-supporting—which was also essential for Miriam in Lawrence's novel; and the ambition to achieve, to become "somebody" through one's work. These fifteen students, and generations of others I taught in the following seven years, maintained the ideology that separated middle-class white women from the male work world and ethic. Such women students expected to marry and to be cared for economically. Their privilege cost them their history and of course their future.

The single most important difference in 1981 is that, regardless of social class, young women today know that they are likely to spend most, if not all, of their lives working outside the home. Older women are returning to the campus in large enough numbers to help academe over rough times—and their urge is also vocational. Many circumstances have contributed to this new social milieu: the economic belt-tightening amid rising expectations and a rising inflation around the globe; concern about the population explosion, about food shortages, and an awareness of the relationship between birth rates and the access of women to job markets; in some countries, the need for a new underclass of women workers; as well as the energy of a women's movement in several countries of the West, and the broad-based consciousness-raising experience of the late sixties that led to the women's studies movement. Whatever the combination of circumstances, young women and young men see a different vision from the one that my generation viewed. Indeed, privileged women students on Ivy League campuses may be somewhat blinded by the rhetoric of "you can be anything you want to be." Such students do not want to hear about wage differentials between women and men, or about discriminatory hiring and promotion policies. They want to believe they can attain their vocational goals as easily as the young man in the chair next to them.

I probably need spend no more time on this point, especially for those of you who have been at work during the last decade of vocationalism on campus. Indeed, in a manner I find touchingly ironic, Goucher College, for example, insisting on its educational mission as a women's college, has turned its back on some traditional aspects of liberal arts to initiate career training programs in dance therapy and museum technology. Whether this is better or worse for students at Goucher is not my point. I am interested in the shift in the social milieu in which young women as well as men are going to college. The expectation of both groups of students is that they will work outside the home most of their days; further,

students believe that the function of a college education is to get a job.

I want to emphasize this point, for this function of higher education has been present from the founding of Harvard and other sectarian institutions in the seventeenth century for the training of ministers, through the founding of women's colleges for the training of teachers. The vocational mission of higher education is one rich and important stream that sometimes rises above ground where it visibly carries all varieties of vessels, even trash, in its wake; at other times, the vocational mission sinks far below the surface, hidden by the gardens, the shrubbery, the forests we call the liberal arts curriculum. While the vocational curriculum has segregated female and male students openly—to continue the metaphor, we see the ships of engineers sailing separately from the social welfare vessels—the liberal arts curriculum, similarly assigned to women and men, thrives upon and supports the assumptions beneath sex segregation.

It is the liberal arts curriculum that defines the possibilities for boys and girls, tells them how they will become masculine and feminine beings; offers them a reading of history in which they do *not* all appear; offers to boys, images of hundreds of vocations; to girls, still only a few—despite all the energy of the seventies. The liberal arts curriculum still tells college students about their fathers, not their mothers; teaches students not only how to think, but that men have been the only thinkers. In 1981, the point may be obvious, and painful still, that the sex segregation of the workplace has, for the most part, not changed, and will not continue at least the small changes begun in the seventies unless educators continue to press still more urgently for curricular reform.

But it is also obvious that the liberal arts curriculum is currently in trouble, and for many reasons. Attacked as irrelevant by the vocationalists, it had begun to lose students, especially in the humanities, long before the women's studies movement had gained its current position on campuses. By the mid-seventies, such courses as Women's History in the U.S. were compensating for low enrollments in other history courses. By the mid-seventies also, campuses were gearing up for the next round in the battle to save the liberal arts; through faculty development and the new push for a general education curriculum, the liberal arts were to reemerge as sovereign. I must add, of course, that this last development has occurred with little or no communication with or acknowledgement of the concurrently developing area of women's studies. In general, the reforms proposed return the cam-

pus to basic books in the white, elite Western male tradition, or add several Eastern male texts.

I am here to suggest that that won't do, for many reasons, including the obvious fact that a male-centered curriculum that continues to forward a misogynist view of achieving men and domestic or invisible women, will clash with or confuse the vision and aspirations of half, or a bit more than half, the student body now attending college. Perhaps more important even than that humane reason is another: a return to the old masters does not forward the search for truth which has traditionally been at least part of the liberal arts mission. St. Augustine, Aristotle, Erasmus—these men return us to the monstrous misogyny of the past, which we must of course understand, but which, as the mainstay of the curriculum, is hardly sufficient. In short, then, if the traditional liberal arts curriculum won't do, what will? Nothing short of transformation, the major resource for which is women's studies. I will get to transformation shortly, but I have been urged not to skip anything, and so I will begin with women's studies itself.

When women's studies began in 1968 and 1969, it had hardly a name. But faculty on less than two dozen campuses began to meet to consider what, in addition to teaching single courses, they were attempting to do. If one reads the early manifestoes—and that is what they sound like—of early women's studies *programs*, together, one finds five goals listed: First, to raise the consciousness of students—and faculty alike—about the need to study women, about their absence from texts and from the concerns of scholarship, and about the need to raise consciousness about the subordinate status of women in today as well as in the past. Second, to begin to compensate for the absence of women, or for the unsatisfactory manner in which they were present in some disciplines, through designing new courses in which to focus on women, thus to provide for women in colleges and universities the compensatory education they needed and deserved. Third, to build a body of research about women. Fourth, with that body of research, to re-envision the lost culture and history of women. The fifth goal is the strategic one: using all four goals, the fifth presumed that women's studies would change the education of women and men through changing what we have come to call the "mainstream" curriculum, though we know even more clearly than we did a dozen years ago that it represents far less than half of human history, and only a small portion of human achievement.

Thus from the first, there were two conscious goals in

women's studies: to develop a body of scholarship and a new curriculum about women and the issue of gender; second, to use this knowledge to transform the "mainstream" curriculum, turning it into what it has never been, a "coeducational" one. Mainly, until now, we have worked at the first goal. We have tended our own gardens, fought for our own tiny budgets, and written grant proposals for the three dozen research institutes in women's studies that have the new decade before them. Both in curricular design and in research development, women's studies is on the edge of significant new breakthroughs: in women's history and in the ways in which we will begin to teach women's history with and without men's history; in economic theory and in the understanding of women's role in the economics of industrial and developing countries; in theories of women's moral and intellectual development; in sex differences and in the socialization of girls and boys—I am thinking here of the longitudinal study at Stanford now in its seventh year; in the restoration of women writers and artists and other intellectuals that will see their works back in print or on the walls of museums, and the accompanying reevaluations of their achievement. And this is a very small sampling of work in progress.

Women's studies is the omitted half of that intellectual ferment that began in academe about a century ago when the new professional associations and the graduate schools first thought to amass what we now call "scholarship." The scholarship of patriarchy will remain in question until it is corrected by this new surge of research. Whether or not you are in women's studies, its scholarship will affect your discipline. That is one vision of the eighties.

Because I see this body of knowledge and this curriculum as revolutionary for our century as the original body of scholarship that changed the theistic patterns of education in the United States a century ago, I want to take the time to list its major components. The list is both disciplinary and thematic; it is also meant to be interdisciplinary: that is, whatever your discipline, if you are to teach about women, you will need at least a slight acquaintance with almost all the other elements on the list. This list also describes the basic curriculum in mature women's studies programs, and serves as a design for developing an interdisciplinary program of courses for those who would transform the liberal arts. And perhaps I should say, in anticipation, that this list, and all the scholarship it represents, is both our major resource for the future and—because it is formidable—one of the major barriers to

the goals we seek. Someone recently said that to begin in 1981 to gain an understanding of the new scholarship on women—whatever one's discipline—is comparable to beginning to earn a new doctorate. I don't think that is an exaggeration; understanding the dimensions of our task may help us to move forward.

The list:

1. an understanding of patriarchy in historical perspective; philosophically and sociologically; its relationship to the religions of the world, and to ideas of knowledge and power—hence, an understanding of what it means to be born "permanently" into a subordinate or dominant status; a knowledge of feminist theory.

2. an understanding of the complex, confusing, and still chaotic area of biological/psychological sex differences; the importance of null findings.

3. an understanding of socialization and sex roles, as well as of sex-role stereotyping; the relationships among gender, race, and class—all from a cross-cultural perspective.

4. an understanding of women in history, not only in the United States, but throughout the world; recognizing that such study includes legal as well as medical history—the history of birth control, for example, is essential to the study of women, even to the study of fiction about women.

5. an understanding of women as represented in the arts they have produced, some of which have been buried or ignored as arts—quilt-making, for example, or the pottery of North American Indian women; and as represented in the significant literature by women of all races and nationalities that never was included in the literary curriculum; as well as an awareness that the images of women portrayed by the male-created arts have helped to control the dominant conceptions of women—hence, the importance of studying images of women on TV, in the film and the theatre, and in advertising.

6. an understanding of the ways in which post-Freudian psychology has attempted to control women's destiny; an awareness that other male-centered psychological constructs like those of Erikson and Kohlberg are potentially damaging to women; an understanding of new women-centered theories of female development.

7. an understanding of female sexuality, including perspectives on both heterosexuality and lesbianism; special issues involved in birth control and reproduction.

8. an understanding of the history and function of education

as support and codifier of sex-segregation and of limited opportunities for women; some perspectives on education as an agent for change in the past and present.

9. an understanding of the history and function of the family in the United States and cross-culturally; of the current variety of family structures, and of the conflict between beliefs and research findings with reference especially to issues surrounding childcare.

10. an understanding of women in the work force through history, in the present, and cross-culturally; the economy in relation to women; the relationship between money and power in personal interactions, in the family, and in society.

11. an understanding of the relationship between laws affecting women and social change; the history of women and social movements.

All the items noted above are meant to include women of all social classes, races, nationalities, and ethnic, religious, and sexual identities. This approach distinguishes women's studies from "the men's curriculum," a term invented in the late nineteenth century by M. Carey Thomas, second president of Bryn Mawr College, to describe what she thought college women had a right to, and which at the time was considered too difficult for their allegedly tiny brains, or allegedly harmful to their childbearing capacities. The attempt to include women of all races and classes in the women's studies curriculum distinguishes it from the traditional male-centered curriculum.

Two methodological issues need also to be noted. First, the *comparative approach*. Since most if not all learning occurs through comparisons, it would be strange indeed if the study of women did not also illuminate the study of men. On the other hand, it is possible to study cohorts of half the human race in their own contexts and on their own terms, without reference to the other half—which is, of course, what male-centered social science has done for almost a century. Obviously, we need both the comparative data and the data for each sex separately, but it may take a couple of generations before we have sufficient data about women to move on to some of the comparative questions. In the meantime, of course, there are also scholars attempting to look at the male data anew, and from a feminist perspective.

Second, the *documentary base*. Though we could see the outlines only dimly in 1969, more than a decade later we have many full portraits of the lives of women both famous and obscure, public and private, singly and in groups, and we understand that we have only touched the surface of the material still to

be collected, studied, sifted, made available. For several hundred years, women have been recorders, letter-writers, diary-keepers, secretaries of clubs and other women's groups, as well as professional writers. There are also many more women painters and composers than we had even been able to dream of. Beyond those documents still coming to light in attics, county museums, and private libraries, women speak mutely in statistics of births, marriages, employment, deaths. In addition, there are the millions who await the social scientist: subjects of research for the next century at least, to compensate for their absence, and to improve by their presence, the body of knowledge on which public policy is based.

During the first five or six years of its existence, on many campuses women's studies programs carried on their work in a form Gayle Graham Yates of Minnesota has called "creative anarchy." Courses were described on flyers turned out on mimeograph machines and circulated "underground" on campuses. Faculty risked when they taught a women's studies course, and many of them, especially in the early seventies when there was still some elasticity especially in the heavily endowed privates or richly funded publics, played musical chairs: they left one institution's English department where they had taught women's studies and had been considered "not serious" therefore, to go to another where they tried similar courses.

By 1976, when the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs asked me to review the status of women's studies programs, mature ones were well on their way to being institutionalized: they had modest budgets; a paid coordinator, often in a line administrative position; and a formal procedure for regularizing the curriculum that was, increasingly, leading to minors, B.A.s, if not to M.A.s, graduate minors, and Ph.D.s. But what was also clear was that the format of women's studies programs was not that of academic *departments*. The model, even in all its variant forms, was that of an interdisciplinary program, more like the initial form of American Studies than like the newer form of Black Studies.

Women's studies programs function as networks on campuses, not departments, and certainly not as what are commonly understood as "ghettoes." That means that most faculty members who teach in a women's studies program do so from a location in a traditional department. That is the way in which 90 percent of all women's studies courses are taught. Whether the campus is one of the 350 with formal programs, or whether, like Smith College,

it is not, (but offers more "courses on women" than some programs) the same fact holds: the courses are listed in departments as well as by the Women's Studies Program; faculty in those departments have one foot, sometimes only a toe, in the Women's Studies Program. Only very few programs—fewer than the fingers on one hand—have tenured faculty or directors in women's studies itself. Almost all have to depend on departments that are willing to tenure faculty who teach one or two women's studies courses each year.

What distinguishes a women's studies course from a course on women taught in a department? In general, the major distinction may be no more than the existence or absence of a women's studies program. And what, you may be thinking, is the virtue of having a women's studies program, therefore? Programs offer introductory, interdisciplinary courses, and sometimes a few additional core courses as well, and sometimes all of these under their own label, as well as senior integrative seminars. They also advise majors and minors, and prepare a logically organized curriculum within an interdisciplinary framework for those students wishing either to be majors and perhaps to become scholars in the area, or to enlarge their educational perspective to include the other half of the human race. We need women's studies programs because we need to prepare another generation of scholars able to contribute to the new scholarship on women.

During the last four or five years some of the oldest women's studies programs have attempted to think strategically about their second mission: the transformation of the traditional curriculum. In addition, on more than a dozen campuses without women's studies programs, and in several cases funded generously under the U.S. Department of Education's Women's Educational Equity Act, projects were begun under the rubric of "mainstreaming" or "integrating" women into the curriculum.

And perhaps this is the place to pause for a few paragraphs on terminology. A women's studies course that I teach, for example, on women writers includes material on patriarchy, on socialization, on the social, medical and legal history of women, as well as the literary tradition of which they are a part. The course is literary, yet interdisciplinary, more interdisciplinary than the courses I used to teach called Twentieth Century American Fiction—that consisted entirely of male writers, and focused entirely on the texts. What does it mean to "mainstream" or to "integrate" women into the curriculum? Leaving to one side the unsatisfactory psychology of the idea of women as necessarily

out of the mainstream, the term has been used to signify a process: that women's studies courses, are *ipso facto*, ghetto courses; that taking a course on women in a department, thus, is "mainstreaming." That is one use of the term, and, if you understand that most women's studies courses are, in fact, *in* departments, this idea adds little to what we already have in progress. In fact, it reminds me of the dean I interviewed during my year of work on *Seven Years Later* who felt that women's studies at his institution had completed its job and should be congratulated and dismantled. Women's Studies at this dean's institution had developed fifteen different courses in some twelve departments. The rest of the curriculum had not been altered one jot, but this large urban university now offered its students 15 different courses on women. The revolution had arrived; indeed, was over. Could I tell him that, in my view, the work had not yet begun—that these courses were, in one sense, preliminary to the real job?

"Integrating" women into the curriculum, or "integrating women's studies" has still a different meaning, or series of meanings. It is coming to signify at its worst, what Charlotte Bunch has called the "add women and stir" method of curricular revision. In practice, it may mean a single lecture in a course of 40 lectures; or the ubiquitous week on suffrage in the American history course; or the addition of a woman writer or two to the traditional literature course.

All of this—"mainstreaming" or "integrating"—adding tokens even—may be better than nothing (at least one can argue that case); but it is not what I mean when I describe the task ahead as "transformational." I am talking about "changing the form of"—that is what transformation means—"changing the form of" the teaching of the curriculum so as to include all the human race, and not just a small segment of it. I am assuming, and there is much now on which to base that assumption, that research on women is changing the shape of the disciplines, and that, naturally, therefore, the shape of courses based on such research will similarly be transformed. If we are serious about including the literature that women have written in courses *with* the literature that men have written, we will have to think anew about the bases on which we organize these courses; we may revise the genres we emphasize, as well as the significant themes, not to mention the historical backgrounds and biographical information we need to offer to students. The study of literature, *qua* literature, may be very different twenty years from now. Similarly, art history, if one begins to include the art produced by women, and of course

history itself will, of necessity, have to be organized rather differently if it is to include both sexes: even basic matters—dividing courses into what are called historical periods—will probably be different, as well the chief themes, the strategic data bases, and so forth.

One more word about "mainstreaming," "integrating," and "transforming." The first two—mainstreaming and integrating: these represent reforms that all faculty can begin on; like women's studies in its initial stages, mainstreaming projects, and projects that call for the integration of women into the curriculum, call for perhaps a single summer institute with a few months of study. The more depth here, of course, the more time to read and the more adequate the provision for some other means of learning, the better. Whether one organizes seminars, or a lecture series for faculty just beginning to study about women; or whether one devises a coherent process of team-teaching, faculty need more organized support for these efforts in 1981 than they needed a dozen years ago when the field was new and when a handful of intrepid persons who saw each other during national professional association meetings, developed the scholarly base on which much of their own teaching about women moved forward. Now, in 1981, the scholarship accumulated through the past decade is itself formidable, in some sense a barrier as well as an aide, for those who wish to begin to add women to the curriculum in some form. It is simply hard for many faculty to know where to begin—at least without a guide.

On the other hand, it is clear enough that the place to begin is to read and then to teach *about women*. It is, in my view, impossible to move directly from the male-centered curriculum to what I have described as "transformation" of that curriculum into a changed and coeducational one—without passing through some form of women's studies. One might begin with the "unit" on women, or even the single lecture; one might get on to a week or two, or a month, but one will have to teach a whole course on women, and will have to understand the interdisciplinary base before one can begin to work at that transformed curriculum.

In short, there is no way around women's studies, if by that term we mean a deep and rich immersion in the scholarship on women. I am not being, in the manner of academics, territorial, about my claims. There is no need to be—the goal is quite the opposite. But without a clear view of the dimensions of the task, we may never get to it. How do we, in 1982, face this problem in ways that are both realistic and productive, not discouraging, but

not falsely optimistic?

I will try to list the resources and the barriers we have as we try to move forward, the barriers first, so that I can end, at least, on an optimistic note—and I should add at once, of course, that I do feel optimistic or I would not be here. I know that, despite retrenchment, the reactionary backlash, despite the state of academe, the country, and the world, there is still a great deal of energy out there—and in here—for this work, and, as you will see, I believe strongly in the relationship of this work to the daily fabric of lives of millions of women and men around the globe. I believe that this educational work will make a difference to people for a century to come.

The barriers, and I will be brief about them. First, that the body of knowledge now is formidable may be seen as a barrier. Second, what Wheaton College president Alice Emerson called recently the "devaluation" of women by women and men alike, the trivialization of the work and lives of women, the assumption that women's history is less important than men's history. This leads directly to what two colleagues have described to me as the greatest barrier on their urban campus—the "indifference" of the mainly male tenured faculty. Jessie Bernard, in *The Prism of Sex*, combines these barriers in an interesting formulation and links them to still another—the rewards in academe are not, thus far at least, for scholarship on women:

> Men find female scholarship dealing with women boring, dull, unimportant. It is not about them and hence not interesting. If it is critical of them, they find it painful. In any event, they look to one another for professional recognition, and mastery of the products of female scholarship will not win that recognition for them.

At least one other internal barrier should be mentioned—the possible resistance of vocationally-bound students who may unthinkingly judge that learning about women won't get them a job. (Parenthetically, I should note that women's studies programs often claim to be equipping students for the real world of work—and many do make good on their claims.)

External barriers these days are deepening. There is the "Moralistic Minority," a force in some areas of the country, and on some campuses. There is also the elimination of some federal programs that had just begun to serve this area of curricular reform, and the cutting of others. There is also the new strain on the private foundations who have, in fact, led the way in this area, and who may not be able to do all that they would wish.

But what of the resources? First of all, on every campus, we have some core of persons with whom to begin working—we have

our organizing committee; we need only to recognize them and call them by that name. Where there is no women's studies program, there are at least a handful of courses, the faculty of which might be your core, perhaps along with some faculty development folk. These people need to devise an appropriate strategy for your campus, and the tactics for getting there, both for the year ahead and for the decade. Such work needs both time and space, and the vision of change as an ongoing process.

In addition to the body of knowledge, which I am, of course, listing here as a very real resource, we also have a coherent conceptual frame. We can be, in 1981, more coherent about this frame than we could be a decade ago, and I think this is helpful for teaching each other as well as our students. The frame has two parts: what is a feminist perspective? do we need it to teach about women? and is this feminist perspective political?

First, the feminist perspective.

A woman in Montreal recently asked me, "How can you teach faculty—male or female—to teach about women, if they are not sensitive to women's perspective, to feminism? How can you teach them to be sensitive?" I had been lecturing about how I came to feminism and women's studies—and for me the two terms are interchangeable. The process involved experience, sharing that experience with others, and then making sense of it through reading, thinking, analysis, often with the tools of social science, history, literature, philosophy. In other words, it was a complex process, and, of course, I had the advantage of a life as a woman. I even had the advantage of my previous lack of consciousness. And it is that lack of consciousness that can be viewed both as barrier and as aide—at least if one can pierce it.

Coming to a feminist consciousness meant, for me, coming to the painful understanding that the world was divided into male and female, and that these categories, like those of race, were not to be changed or exchanged. Unlike students who might become teachers, or children who often become parents, males and females do not in a sexist society change places any more than blacks and whites. Can men come to this understanding? Of course. Though they may not be able to replicate female experience, men can understand and study its existence. Provided they are alert to the differences between their experiences and those of women, men can develop a feminist perspective. And perhaps I should not assume, but should mention, that being alert to women's experience, listening for it, also includes valuing it for its own sake. This is perhaps the most difficult element. As

Dorothy Smith, a Canadian sociologist, has said, "It has not been easy for women (any more than for men) to take what women have to say as authoritative nor is it easy to find our own voice convincing. It is hard for us to listen to ourselves." And so it is not surprising that it is harder for men to learn to listen to women. But if we are to succeed at this task, we need both the patience for it and the belief that it is possible.

Still more complex, but also clearer than a decade ago, is the question of the political nature of what we are doing. Is this feminist perspective, is this teaching about women, a political act?

As complex is the associated question: is a feminist perspective "political"? Is research about women politically-biased research rather than objective truth? Again, it is easier in 1981 to answer this question, not only because some esteemed male scholars have been writing about the ways in which a variety of perspectives help to shape the information we call "knowledge." It is, indeed, impossible to avoid a perspective from whence we teach or organize our scholarly projects. For me, it is more dangerous either to ignore or to support openly the patriarchal assumptions that govern our society than to challenge them openly through the feminist lens, and to ask that questions be reopened, that female experience be viewed alongside male.

In the broadest context of that word, teaching is a political act: some person is choosing, for whatever reasons, to teach a set of values, ideas, assumptions, and pieces of information, and in so doing, to omit other values, ideas, assumptions, and pieces of information. If all those choices form a pattern excluding half the human race, that is a political act one can hardly help noticing. To omit women entirely makes one kind of political statement; to include women as a target for humor makes another. To include women with seriousness and vision, and with some attention to the perspective of women as a hitherto subordinate group is simply another kind of political act. Education is the kind of political act that controls destinies, gives some persons hope for a particular kind of future, and deprives others even of ordinary expectations for work and achievement.

In a university whose goal is that abstraction called truth, no political act ought ideally to be excluded, if it might shed light on the ultimate goal. And the study of half the human race—the political act we call women's studies—cannot be excluded without obvious consequences to the search for truth.

One last word, since though we may sit in a room in the middle of the United States, concerned about United States higher

education, women's studies is a world-wide movement. And perhaps, if I try to conclude in that context, my final point will be clearer. For we are not only searching for the truth when we design educational programs. We know that these programs send people out to the world they must live in, and guide them to think about themselves and others in human or inhuman ways. Everywhere in the world, education for women is a new frontier. In some European countries, very few women go to college at all. In Italy, women's studies courses are part of trade union activity for women who are learning that they have a right to read, and a right to the pleasures of a cultural heritage as well as to the eight-hour day. In most of the so-called developing countries, women are the majority of illiterates, and some in charge of their education are learning that access to education is not enough, if what women gain are, first, instruction in maintaining their subordinate status; and, second, access only to the worst-paying jobs.

In developing countries, the need for accurate information on which to base decisions that affect millions of persons, half of whom are inevitably women, makes women's studies—meaning at least research on women—hardly a luxury. Thus, a pan-African women's research organization claims research on women as an essential activity for survival of the nation's economy and heritage, as well as the lives of women. In India, research on women at the beginning of the seventies turned up a singular demographic pattern: the declining percentages of women in the adult population, despite the higher rate of female births. This is a singular phenomenon world-wide, the changing of which—through education, among other means—might mean life rather than death to millions of women and female children over a single decade.

Thus, to conclude, the study of women in the curriculum and in research institutes is not only an academic question; it is not only a question of the right of women to a place in the curriculum that will allow them images of achievement and aspiration comparable to those the curriculum has generally afforded at least to white middle class males. It is also essential if the university is to continue to be able to stake its claim to truth; and because of the increasingly significant way in which knowledge is used in our shrinking world, it is also of ultimate importance to the present and future lives of women all over the world.

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A Feminist Critique of the Liberal Arts

Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich

The most obvious thing about our liberal arts schools is that they do not offer the traditional liberal arts. We offer an array of disciplines distinguished from each other in fact, as in name, by subject matter not, despite some "mission" statements, by the thinking art each develops. We do not teach the trivium of grammar, logic, rhetoric, which are in fact, as in name, *modes of thought*. Insofar as we teach these liberal arts directly at all, it is as *subjects* embedded in others that are considered more inclusive, such as, for grammar, English (or other languages); for logic, philosophy; and, for rhetoric, politics, or perhaps the curiously mixed subject called "communications." From the perspective of those who devised the liberal arts, what we offer in the curriculum are at best liberal sciences, rather than arts, or insofar as they are arts, servile arts, that is, the skills of specialists (which the ancients relegated to slaves).

Yet we feel strongly about our commitment to a liberal arts education, and despite drastic changes in *what* is taught *how*, we know that somehow we are, and should be, true to the tradition. To understand ourselves so that we may be free to accept or reject what we have more or less knowingly inherited, it is, I believe, helpful to start not with the quite modern list of subjects we offer, but with the avowed goals of education. Purposes have a way of informing what we do, all the more powerfully as when they have been working behind the scenes for a long, long time.

The purpose of education as it began to be formalized in "our" tradition was the development of the public *man*, the good citizen who was also a good military man (the quotes around "our" are there because they really meant males and so did not include many of us who are nevertheless expected to consider ourselves included). The skills considered appropriate for this group were non-occupational, albeit in other senses useful. The students were not those who would have to work, but were, rather, those who would be free of work and so able to participate in public life, in politics and wars. Education was for full-time

citizenship, and leadership was the result of an agonistic relationship among those few already defined as capable of the free and noble life of citizens. Those to be educated were taken to exemplify the defining characteristics of humanity, to have the potential for virtue. It is worth remembering that "virtue" meant excellence of kind, and so was only appropriate for those who were taken to exemplify their kind. In this formative period, whether the political leader or the military leader was greater was also a subject of debate as, later, a contest developed between the political leader and the religious (with the intervening position that the philosopher was higher than both political and military *men*). Still, leadership and therefore temporal power, however justified by whatever source of external authority, has always been of concern to those devising and participating in higher education.

Education for citizenship and leadership; education that develops the virtues, the excellences that are specifically human, that humanize us; education that is not vocational but develops abilities more basic and inclusive than any particular skills; education that considers character as important as intellect; education for a "free and noble" life—throughout, the education offered as the best has been intended to serve such goals. It still is. Although the meaning of almost every key word describing these goals has changed—and will change further—they also remain with us, freighted with the past.

How, then, can we question the nobility of purpose we have inherited? Well, we can question the whole notion of nobility and its dependence on a very narrow idea of freedom. Those who built the foundations of "our" education were the highly privileged products of a very restrictive, hierarchical society. Citizenship involved full, daily participation in public affairs, and therefore only those who had very little else to do could be citizens. The "free and the noble" were the few whose lives were utterly supported by wealth for which they did not work and by care-taking provided by people whose own lives were entirely given over to and dominated by the few.

And the "free and the noble"—those who exemplified and defined, in a closed circle, the excellences and virtues of so-called humanity—were men. There were free-born and noble women suitable for the men, but, as we always find, those women were not to be free and noble in the same way. They were refused access to the public realm, which meant they were not free except as women; that is, their freedom was defined as different from that

held to be human. Half the human race was defined as less than human and had particular excellences ascribed to it in distinction from those proper to and only considered possible for men. The definition of what it meant to be human was in male hands, and was persistently and consciously cast in oppositional terms: What was "manly" was precisely what was not "womanly." Since "man" and "human" were taken to be co-extensive terms, that means that what was "womanly" was at best not quite human. And the definition thus cast was *not* considered limited by its exclusion of half the human race.

As the quest for knowledge preceeded, a great many voices that might have raised awkward questions about the vision of what it is to be human were simply not heard. And this exclusiveness was considered entirely proper. It is dishonest of us now to say blithely "man covers us all." It didn't and was not intended to. We cannot change that fact, guilty consciences notwithstanding. "Our" tradition is not impartial at all. It is partial in both senses of the term. It is *for* as well as *by* a part, the few.

It was for the few, and not even a half, because the definition of "human" excluded a great many men as well. The men who thought about mankind were men whose freedom—political, economic, personal, intellectual—rested on the complete domination of others. Their noble lives were made possible by the enforced ignoble lives of women, slaves, workers, foreigners, by the great mass of not-quite-human "humanity." The men to be educated as citizens were not to feel the force of necessity as did those whose work was to care for their bodily needs. Nor did they, the few, work with their hands. The use of physical strength for anything other than the effort to win the spoils and honor offered through the competitions of politics and war and sports was too animal and slave-like. The skill of making things was the skill of specialists, for a long time slaves and foreigners. Aristotle, whose influence on "our" tradition has been enormous, not only presents a justification of slavery (a wondrously circular one in which those who have been enslaved are, by that fact, proven to be naturally—by nature—slavish), and of the inferiority of women (who are also by nature unfit for full humanity), but also carefully argues that sculptors are unfit for citizenship because their work is, after all, so physical.

To be a citizen requires and actualizes freedom; freedom was given only to the few; and equality even among the few was considered possible and appropriate only in politics. Women, slaves, foreigners, artisans, artists were all excluded.

It was a very small group, then, that was to be educated for citizenship, and one carefully defended in every sense—politically, militarily, socially, artistically, *and intellectually*. And as institutionalized education developed, so did that control. It becomes less visible but no less telling. Socrates was put to death for questioning too much; Plato founded the Academy and taught, but was himself briefly enslaved when he actually tried to advise a ruler on how to be a philospher-king; and Aristotle, "The Philosopher" who dominated western thought for centuries, was advisor to Alexander the Great and other tyrants. It is a dramatic and revealing story. From Socrates we have records of spontaneous conversations in the marketplace; he was killed. From Aristotle, who lived well, we have lecture notes; he was an official teacher and successful expert advisor to rulers . . . a striking foreshadowing of the modern professional teacher and already a far cry from the Socratic ideal that developed in the spaces between—free of and from political and social institutions.

I am using the Socrates-to-Aristotle development metaphorically as well as historically, but it is telling in both senses. As the Renaissance based itself in important part on the re-discovery of Plato, perhaps our re-birth can spring from the re-discovery of those who, like Socrates, know what it is to converse; believe that all certainties must be questioned; turn to the domestic and craft spheres for vivid examples in intellectual arguments (thereby bringing truth home, quite literally); have refused loyalty not only to any single institution but to the prevailing powers when necessary; and know that many of the most important truths are learned not from successfully competitive generals and politicians but from those who stubbornly persist in thinking, whether they be male *or* female, noble *or* "servile," free or familiar with necessity; polite or impolite. Socrates was honest enough—"man enough?"—to credit women from whom he learned, and proudly compared himself to an ignoble mid-wife when he spoke of how he drew forth ideas from people who claimed to know, assisting not only in the birth but in the often unfavorable evaluation of the product.(No wonder he was so unpopular with those in power.)

Women's studies is in two senses revolutionary: It asks us to create a new order, but it also asks us to turn back to the beginning to find what inspiration and clarity we can—without ever losing our critical perspective. And at the beginning we find someone who questioned, who in spirit opposed the founders of the tradition that finally prevailed, and, above all, who conversed. Given the influence of Socrates, it is fascinating that rhetoric

became an art, a liberal art, but conversation did not. It seems always to have been considered both too trivial and too dangerous (sort of like women). As a thought experiment, to shake ourselves free of the bemusement of the ages, let's explore that. Conversation remains a largely private art; we do not have a tradition of teaching it. What happens in conversation? There is an exchange between people that actively involves both: A crossed monologue is not a conversation. Each speaker takes the other into account, asking questions, seeking words and ways to speak that can be heard by the other, listening with as much seriousness as speaking. What happens in conversation is *between* people. A good conversation is interesting—is *inter*, "inter-est."

Rhetoric, on the other hand, is the product of a speaker who stands before an audience. One is convincing; many are to be convinced. The audience must be taken into account if the speaker is to succeed, but that taking into account is not primarily in order to share with people but to move them. And, as Aristotle, again, noted in his *Rhetoric*, one of the most convincing arguments a speaker has is his (he meant "his", of course) own character. The rhetorician should strive to be charismatic, to move people not solely by force of argument but by force of projected personality. Rhetoric presents us with highly visible, singular personalities standing alone before us.

Rhetoric is public; conversation is private. Conversation is the art of those who hold us together, in enjoyment of our differences. When we become too familiar, too like, conversation tends to falter. The space between us is necessary to it. Rhetoric is the art of those who move us together, overcoming our differences. Rhetoric *is* important; it is simply not the only art important to a humane citizenry and politics—and life. Yet rhetoric has been taught as a liberal art, and conversation has not. We need not look far for the reason why: rhetoric is *public* persuasion; conversation is *private*. The private realm in which we meet face-to-face has not been considered free and noble. It has been in the care of women, and what is womanly has not made it into "our" tradition.

What would have happened if Socrates and Diotima, and not only Aristotle, had prevailed? What would have happened if women, and not only men, had been included? What would it be like if we were not still shaped by the rhetorical world view?

I am absolutely fascinated by the new scholarship on women in part because it offers such a vision.

The questions raised by women's studies scholars, like those

asked by Socrates, trip us up. They not only allow, they require us to ask audacious questions. We ask, "But *does* 'mankind' include us? Does our history include women . . . and not just the few who 'made it' in a man's world? Does our psychology teach us about women as well as men, or do we still define 'human' and 'male' as coextensive? Do our works of literature speak to and of women; are some of them also by women?"

The move to women's studies is in the Socratic spirit. We, too, put loyalty to truth above loyalty to the tradition, to received knowledge, to those who claim to know, to the presently prevailing packages of kinds of knowing (the disciplines). The cardinal error that Socrates exposed in his questioning was the assumption that one instance can be *the* type, *the* ideal, a fundamental error that occurs when too few examples have been considered—as in mistaking the qualities of some few males for human ideals. Like a mid-wife assisting in a birth who simply brings out what is already there, Socrates drew out the implications of assuming, for example, that justice is simply what is legal. Doing so, he revealed the contradictions inherent in much that we all simply accept. That is what the new scholarship on women does, and it, too, is not always popular.

For example, it is said that we are included in "mankind," and that "mankind" is still influenced by the early version of "man the hunter." We ask if "man the hunter" really included us all. Clearly, it did not. Then we ask why we should assume that the fact that a few hunted is as significant as we are supposed to think it is. Might not the first tool have been a hoe, or a sling for carrying a baby, rather than a weapon? Aggression may have been useful for a few; it may have been equally dysfunctional for many more.

It is said that "work" and "employment" are synonymous, and the marketplace is taken to be *the* expression of "our" productivity. We ask about work that is not paid for yet makes paid work possible. We ask what women have done, women, who have always worked whether they were paid, or recognized, for it or not. If what is done at home—if the kinds of jobs women have been restricted to outside of the home—makes possible what is done in the marketplace as a whole, does it make sense to omit the housework, or to ignore the exploitation of "women's jobs," when we deal with the GNP?

It is said that history records great deeds, great events, the important facts about "our" past. We ask, does it tell us about women? Does it cover the whole human race? And if not, why not? Who has decided what is great, what is important, what we

need to know—and *why* have they decided it in just that way? That women have for so long been omitted from history means not only that we have to add them, or that we have to re-think what is important and why, but also that we have to ask, squarely and courageously, who has been excluded, who has been exploited, who has been oppressed, why and how and to whose benefit. And then we have to ask how we can see those who have been shut out in their own lives and terms, as they have lived lives from which we can learn and draw inspiration. To see the oppressed only as oppressed is to continue to define them from the perspective of those in power. And that is precisely what we are trying not to do. The part is *not* the whole.

We wish to see woman in man's world; we wish also to see man in woman's world, and from her perspective, so that we may finally work towards a human perspective on our world. We wish to see leaders in their public lives and deeds; we wish also to see public lives and deeds as the collective product they indeed are. We wish to see wars from the perspective of the victors, and the losers, and within the context of the everyday life that makes wars both possible and execrable. Perhaps that way we can finally remove its fake glitter and glory.

Very simply, never forgetting its difficulty, we wish to look for the multi-faceted, multi-dimensional truth—at least to rededicate ourselves to it, and to impartiality, to the ability to see the whole honestly.

We may be fascinated by the few great men who, we are told, shaped our world and our discourse, but then we, as outsiders to and critics of the liberal arts tradition, want to know more than the rhetorical view reveals.

Where there is a claim to objectivity, we ask why subjectivity is supposed to be excluded and what we can also learn from it. We also ask whether what claims to be objective is really so. In the so-called "hard" sciences, for example, we are told that the search for truth is objective, concerned only with knowledge and not with values, with thought and not with politics. Is that true? Descriptions of the process of discovery regularly mention the critical role of intuition (that supposedly irrational, female ability), of sudden insight, of an informing vision that has driven many great scientists to persist, seemingly irrationally, in the face of massive evidence that they were on the wrong track. If we admitted the role of stubbornness, and of intuition and imagination, in science, might we not teach it differently? And might we not define it in a way that encouraged those with the so-called "feminine" as well as

the so-called "masculine" abilities to feel capable?

Histories of science regularly reveal the tremendous influence of political and economic forces, and of personal ambition, as well as the increase in a collaborative mode of work in modern science. If we also taught science in its context, in part as the product of collaborative work highly vulnerable to the availability or lack of funding, itself an expression of the pressures and rewards of any given political era, might we not help prepare scientists better able to guard themselves against the distortions of often quite vicious professional competition, and the temptations it leads to? We would like to find a way to help cut through the rhetoric of "value-free" research that merely obscures the realities of day-by-day work in the scientific world.

Women's studies scholars raise such issues. We ask where the women are in science, and find them working at low pay in the laboratories, unpromoted despite sometimes extraordinary ability—and that, too, makes us question the claims of scientists to be impartial, objective, in quest of truth whatever it takes. We ask who set the research agenda for science, and why, to find out why it has developed as it has, and that makes us study it in its true context. It returns the world to the laboratory, and the classroom, and with the world, real responsibility. Why should scientists be exempt? Why should we continue to believe they are? *The* area that is supposed to be a stumbling block for women's studies ("I mean, you can find women authors, and women in history, I suppose, but what about *physics* or *chemistry?*") turns out to be one of the most revealing of the ways we have mystified "our" tradition. There is nothing like conducting research on the history of science to set the notions of the purity and impartiality and individuality of the quest for knowledge reeling.

Philosophy, too, is sometimes held up as an example of a field immune to women's studies or, in any case, open only to marginal special interest courses. But consider: When the great philosophers speak of "man," do they mean to include women? Almost without exception, they do not. When Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, Rousseau do write about women, it emerges once again that they see us as different, that what they take to be human is what is male. What is female is, therefore, at best a kind of aberration. These are the thinkers who have shaped our notions of rationality, of meaning, of experience, of knowledge—of justice and of equality. They are models for us of what "great" thought is. It *is* doing mainstream philosophy to test them for their own contradictions and to ask, in dead seriousness, what the

relation is between their apparently neutral metaphysics and epistemology and their visibly partial, and partisan, political theories and ethics. What kind of theory of knowledge, or justice, or equality, or education, or politics, or of being itself, can emerge from an effort of thought that omits half the human race *and does not consider that a problem?*

If we want to learn about thought, *human* thought, and about meaning, *human* meaning, to have a vision of what is just and what is good and what is real, we need to check every thinker's consistency, to check all works to see how well they deal with humankind and not only with mankind. We need to see the values both revealed and served by such systems. Philosophy itself demands it.

Again, what women's studies lead to is not a few add-on works or courses, but a transformation of how we approach knowledge, a transformation that allows us to stop *saying* that "man" includes us all and start making it do so . . . by fundamentally changing the partiality of the base of our whole tradition.

We have decided that we cannot accept the claims to being universal, to knowing what is best and what is important that liberal arts schools, following a very old tradition, make. Yet we do not reject it all. Sometimes I think that those of us who were not included are among the only true believers. It is in the name of truth and excellence and a vision of knowledge that is uplifting for us all that we work. I believed it when I was told that I was included in "man" and that ability was the key to access and that we knew what greatness really is. It took a lot to make me stop believing. But I also believed that I was supposed to question, and that one of the purposes of a higher education was to give me a critical attitude toward all claims of truth. However, when I have exercised my critical right to question, have simply asked, "But are we included?" I have discovered that I was not really supposed to, after all. I am, after all, a woman. I am still widely required to think better intuitively than rationally, and yet to de-value my intuition (about which I am taught nothing at all in most fields). I am supposed to be better at literature than at the "hard" sciences, math, and philosophy. I am to question, but in safe ways. I am *not* to question my own exclusion or the exclusion of others. The minute I do so, I am suspect. I am to take myself seriously, but not when that in any way conflicts with taking the men in my life, great ones like Plato and Aristotle and Augustine (and the male teachers who introduced me to them), seriously. They come first. If I—if we—question, if we want a rational answer to why we are

so rarely represented, why the lives and works of our mothers, our grandmothers, all our foremothers—over half the human race—are considered too trivial to study (except perhaps in one little add-on course), we are considered strident, unreasonable, certainly untenurable.

But we want, we need, to know what women's lives, women's achievements have been. Of course we do. The lives and achievements of a few white men who were far better off than most of us will ever be and whose lives were, to our minds, painfully parasitic and removed from the genuine tragi-comedy of everyday life don't always speak to us—to most of us. They inspire us. They interest us. But they don't give to us what they give to the few, to the privileged white male students and scholars around us, the few who still run education and shape it in their own image (modestly, of course). In my life I am never allowed to forget that I am not one of them, so how can I forget it when I study, except by a massive act of self-deception? I desperately need to know what everyone else was doing all those centuries, and to learn to respect the rich human abilities of women, as well as those who were respected and promoted in a man's world, a gentleman's world. I would have that need even if I were not who and what I am—good heavens! How much more interesting what we learn would be if it were infused with the passions of everyday life, with the struggles for existence of so many, and with the visions and creations of greatness torn from those struggles. How many brilliant voices have we lost from among the "sub-humans," the aberrations, the majority never referred to by "mankind." How are we to know ourselves at all if we cannot, still, hear them?

Because of the outpouring of the new scholarship, I now know of many, many women and many, many black people, and others, of whom I never heard throughout a rather lengthy education. I find them fascinating, brilliant, disturbing, inspiring in a wonderful new and personal way. I am delighted they are being found. Their strength and vision become a part of me, of us, and we can look back at what we have had with greater clarity. Isn't that the goal we all share?

We are looking for a mode of thought and of formal education that does not need to tack on a morality after the fact (as in adding a few ethics courses to law school curricula), but can, in itself, serve to protect us against the stupidity of prejudice, of false exclusivity, and against the pomposity of the notion that we know what is great, and who is, for all time. Scholars who have

discovered women's studies are by now working in all fields. Art historians are not only finding the women artists who are extremely good by the prevailing standards, but are also looking at what women have always done to see what greatness is there, too. We hang quilts on gallery walls, and suddenly we see great design in them. How odd of us, and how blind, to see art only when someone else has selected and hung it up for us when we had it under our noses all along. But it is a step, a critical one, toward asking why a painting on canvas is greater than a painting on a wooden chest in someone's home. Both can be brilliant; both can be dull.

Psychologists are asking how we become, rather than are, an engendered species. Making the obvious distinction between sex and gender, they are freeing us to know ourselves as never before. Musicians and music scholars are listening to music refined through the ages as well as to music created *and* claimed by a few lone stars (many of whom succeeded not only because they were brilliant but also because they played the games of court and patronage politics unusually well). What in their singularity, real or only claimed (and how much music sprang entire from one mind?), guarantees greatness? What in the folk and women's and black tradition guarantees the lack of greatness? They are the products of collective as well as individual work by those long excluded from learning and from what is learned. What in that brands them inferior? And after all is it the prejudiced or the prejudiced against we need to understand and value?

Once we recognize that our notions of what is human and of what is great are too narrow, we are in a new territory. We begin to think once again, to be willing to be confused, to admit that we do not yet know how to judge the works of human minds and hearts and spirits.

More examples: If we think of tragedy as dealing only with the fate of the Great, we miss the possibility of struggling with the question of what ennobles the lives of others, of the tragic dimensions of all life and love and work.

Or think of the novel . . . think of how much trouble we have had dealing with Virginia Woolf, and the agony she herself felt as she fought to create a form that would express a reality not recognized by the male-dominated public world. For many of us, the reality she presents is terribly painful, *not* because it is unfamiliar—to most women it is very, very familiar, the intensity of what happens between people, the soul drama of conversations, of dinner tables—but because we have had no form for it,

have had so little help in translating it from intense, private experience to the shared plane of art.

If women had been present when the canon we now teach and call "our" tradition was created, Virginia Woolf would have had her room, as would Sylvia Plath and countless others whose honest commitment to their own reality, to *our* reality, made them seem even, most painfully, to themselves, crazy. One can lose hold of oneself when what is most intensely real is refused recognition, can find no shared form in which to be expressed. And what is defined and felt as "sane" becomes too narrow for the spirit in us all when it leaves out the realities of half the human race, of women.

If women had been present, if what was critical to life and death matters other than on the battlefields of war and politics had had voices to speak for it, would we so denigrate the education we provide for the very young? Why is it education offered to people already pretty well formed that we consider worthy of the "best" minds among us . . . and that only? Because the care of the young has been left in women's hands does *not* prove that it is unimportant . . . or intellectually unstimulating. We continue to feel that that which public men, men speaking with and for the few, men taking singular credit for collective work in the tradition of the rhetorician, have done is what is great and noble. It may at times *be* great and noble, but it is not alone in being so. Women's studies, like black studies, is based on the premise that there is more, and that what is great is not just that which creates singular figures but also that which includes as an open part of its claim to attention its creation and refinement over time by many in conversation with each other. We want to bring to our tradition the suppressed dimensions of connection, of intuition, of process and context and community so that we can finally return to the same place—our ideas of and ideals for humanity—and know it for the first time.

It is not an either or choice, *either* what we have *or* women's studies. We will only have to choose if what we have and our devotion to it proves too narrow, too locked into its own very particular notions of what truth and beauty and greatness are to accept the challenge to see, to hear, to think always and anew about what people, humans, many more of us that have ever been considered before, have done and can do.

We are working for the enrichment of our curricula, of our lives, not to tack on something new that has been simply overlooked but should be included now in the name of equity. Equity

is not the only point: excellence is, and the examined life, and our sanity, and the possibility of a well-founded rather than defensive pride.

What happens when we stop protecting "our" tradition and listen is both magnificent and painful. We find people like Toni Morrison, a brilliant black woman who wrote a book called *The Bluest Eye*. It is about a young black girl named Pecola Breedlove who wants to have blue eyes more than anything else. Finally she comes to believe she has them. Thinking about her, speaking for her, a child subject to but never included in our blue-eyed world, Morrison writes:

> And the years folded up like pocket handkerchiefs. Sammy left town long ago; Cholly died in the workhouse; Mrs. Breedlove still does housework. And Pecola is somewhere in that little brown house she and her mother moved to on the edge of town, where you can see her even now, once in awhile. The birdlike gestures are worn away to a mere picking and plucking her way between the tire rims and the sunflowers, between Coke bottles and milkweed, among all the waste and beauty of our world—which is what she herself was. All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us. All of us—all who knew her—felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health, her awkwardness made us think we had a sense of humor. Her inarticulateness made us believe we were eloquent. Her poverty kept us generous. Even her waking dreams we used—to silence our nightmares. And she let us, and thereby deserved our contempt. We honed our egos on her, padded our characters with her frailty, and yawned in the fantasy of our strength.
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> And fantasy it was, for we were not strong, only aggressive; we were not free, merely licensed; we were not compassionate, we were polite; not good, but well behaved. We courted death in order to call ourselves brave, and hid like thieves from life. We substituted good grammar for intellect; we switched habits to simulate maturity; we rearranged lies and called it truth, seeing in the new pattern of an old idea the Revelation and the World.
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> She, however, stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her from us simply because it bored us in the end. (Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970) p. 159).

How far, we need to ask ourselves, is that a parable for us in "our" tradition? How many writers like that, speaking of and for how many, have we lost through the ages of preserving the canon, of being gentlemen, of thinking we know what excellence is, what beauty is, what "human" means? And how many others, picking up the reflection of our secure knowledge of what it means to be

human and educated and valuable have quietly and not so quietly surrendered the sense of self that needs to be seen and heard to survive?

If those of us working in and for women's studies sometimes offend by our impatience, our passion, our anger, our interest in things that seem at first to be non-academic, non-serious—which is to say, unfamiliar—that is not only understandable but unavoidable. We are fighting for a stolen reality, for our sanity and for a renewed effort to seek the truth, the whole truth. And, while we admire much of the gentleman's code, we are willing to break it when truth and equity and excellence demand it. The code of gentlemen, which has shaped the liberal arts, can itself be a protector of safe, sound mediocrity. Listen to John Henry Cardinal Newman, in *The Idea Of A University* (1852):

> Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. The description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature; like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their bit in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom or resentment. . . .If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds. (1970 ed. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., pp.217-218)

Politeness matters, of course, but at what cost?

I have spoken about the old noble ideals of a liberal arts education, but I have omitted one, because it, too, was overly restricted. Still, it is a critical one, one we should re-claim. It is the ideal of friendship and our responsibility as educators to prepare our students—all of them—for it. Shades of this ideal haunt us when we notice that students do not have enough experiences in common, and the shade hovers visibly over conversations about a "common core curriculum." There are those who remember with a pang the pleasure of conversations at school when we were less divided, less specialized, less pressed upon by the outside world . . . and less challenged by the newly admitted outsiders. But to

find a ground for worthy friendship, surely we should not go backward, back to the times when educated gentlemen could converse comfortably and always politely with each other . . . but with nobody else. It is worthy in the name of friendship to try, as those involved with women's studies and black studies and others are, to find a common ground for us all that is *not* exclusive and divisible, that does not mistake the excellence of the few for that of all. I have spoken about friendship before as part of an effort to define "feminism." I believe that feminism is a cast of mind, one that, in devotion to truth, is critical of all that claims to be true, and a turn of the heart, a turn toward friendship, to the respect possible between equals who fully and truly see each other. Women's studies is not, as it is often felt to be by those who do not yet understand it, merely an add-on of passing interest. Women's studies are designed not only to enrich but to transform what we know so that it is inclusive rather than partial—so that we can all join in conversation with the best and wisest our world has known, whatever *kind* they were, equally.

If we, the excluded, cannot share in making and changing and maintaining and running and enjoying and knowing about the world we share, we cannot become fully who we are. We will continue to have monumental strengths, as women always have, and to cultivate gifts that the world needs, but being invisible in the public and in the canon taught in "our" schools, we will also continue to lack a secure sense of our reality. Lacking that, we will have trouble giving it to others, and to humanity. We will be deficient in one of the prime tasks of friendships. But so will others. That only men, and only privileged men, have had access to the public world and the realms where the dominant meaning systems have been created, has limited them, too. They have not adequately known, or recognized, or learned about and from, the struggles with necessity, the passions of human relations they have relegated to those who served them. They have too often known competition, not the mutual struggle it takes for us all to win.

Friendship of a kind sometimes but rarely seen so far, friendship between women; between a woman and a man; between men in a competitive world that is comfortable only with a narrow notion of rationality, that finds the binding strength of subjectivity, the intuitive, the mythic, both trivial and threatening (like women, again); between a black and a white person, is worth planning and fighting for. When the world, which is reflected by as well as shaping of our schools, their curricula, their faculties

and their institutional structures, creates and freezes us as hierarchically ranked types, living lives shaped by an unequal sense of what and who is valuable, what and who can be great, it is not noble of us but self-deluding to think we can, individually, slough it all off. We have to meet as equals to be friends, and we cannot just decide that we are equal. We need a world to share, within which we can differ as well as agree on the same level. Equality requires something external to us before which we are equal. It is an achievement, not a given.

We are now, still, educating people in a system that grew out of a hierarchical and partial vision of what humanity is. In doing so, we are not just leaving some people out: we are trying to fit everyone into a model that is too small for anyone. Look only at the relations between the male and female students on your campus. Are the men still students, the women "coeds"? Are they still signing up for courses appropriate to their gender? Are they treating each other as equals, or competing with each other for success and dominance, personal, sexual, intellectual . . . characteristic styles that say they believe that *men* act this way, *women* act that way . . . that is, that out of all the diversity of humanity, it is terribly important that we all and always divide into only two kinds that overwhelm all else. Do the men, as well as the women, ask to hear more about women—about the missing half of the human race—in their classes? Do the women and only the women have to worry about having a career and a marriage . . . a choice no one should *have* to make? Are the men embarrassed when a woman is better at anything than they? Do the women defer to the male students in class, in student organizations, in sports?

Are the stereotypes still with us, and dividing us, not only from each other but from our own richest array of possibilities? If so, how can these young women and men . . . how can we . . . ever truly become friends, even to ourselves?

The Greeks and Romans and scholars of the medieval and renaissance universities, the creators of the tradition whose goals we would like to honor insofar as that is humanly possible, *did not think friendships other than those between the few proper men were possible or desirable.* We believe they are desperately needed and a worthy goal for a liberal arts education. We are working to make them possible, in the name of truth, of a richly diverse reality, of a citizenship based on the friendship of equals. Women's studies and the scholarship that animates and drives it hold forth the vision of a new renaissance. Our liberal arts include among many other arts and sciences and skills and abilities, and a

great deal of new information, the art of conversation, the art that returns to us the richness of the private realm and the realities of community as well as competition. These are the threads that bring public and private realms together, that weave a genuinely shared world in which what is human can perhaps become, for the first time, inclusive rather than exclusive . . . can become not just human but humane.

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The Challenges of Women's History

Gerda Lerner

Women's experience encompasses all that is human; we share—and always have shared—the world equally with men. Equally in the sense that half, at least, of all the world's experience has been ours, half of the world's work and much of its product. In one sense, then, to write the history of women means documenting all of history: women have always been making history, living it and shaping it.

History is the repository, the story of the collective lives and experiences, thoughts and actions of people of past generations. It separates out—by race, by class, by ethnicity, religion, nationality, cultural identity—and it unifies, by recording and interpreting the national experience. History, on a personal level, is the story of one's own life and generation; it is autobiography, diary and biography; it is the story of one's family, of the changes and shifts in structure and life cycles, in rituals and beliefs. History is the means whereby we assert the continuity of human life—collective social immortality—and whereby we record past knowledge and experience for future generations.

But history is not the record of all past events, rather it is the record of past events as interpreted by succeeding generations of historians. History is not a collection of facts, absolute truths, and eternal interpretations, but it is an on-going cultural endeavor by which society expresses its values and beliefs. It is through the selection process of history-making that we assign significance to events. It is in this selection process of history-making that women have been short-changed.

Coming out of centuries of such historical experience, what women have to offer to the humanities is expertise in bridging that culturally-created gap between thinking about being human and acting as a human. This is what feminism is all about—a challenge to the separation; a set of remedies and alternatives; a humanizing world view for women and men. Women's studies, especially women's history, are the essential tools in this humanizing transformation. In this conference we are considering the impact

on curricula of the new scholarship on women and of the demands of women students and faculty on the structure and policies of academe. I would like to concretize some of these issues by discussing them in respect to the field of history.

In an absolute sense, there is no "women's history"—there are and always have been *men* in history and *women* in history. But history as traditionally recorded and interpreted by historians has been, in fact, the history of the activities of men ordered by male values. We might properly call it "men's history." Women have barely figured in it. The few that have been recorded at all have been members of important families or relatives of important men or, occasionally, women who have performed roles usually reserved for men. Women of the past have been anonymous and invisible and that invisibility has extended to the visual record of the past and to material culture. At different historical periods other subordinate groups, such as slaves, peasants, serfs, colonials, have equally been assigned to historical invisibility. As each of these groups has come closer to power and equality, its past has become more visible—but women have longest been denied their history. And today, even as women's history is emerging, black women, Chicanas, women of ethnic minorities and those declared deviant because of their sexual choice are suffering double discrimination and neglect of their history—as members of a neglected group and as women. Yet women have always been half and sometimes more than half the population of this nation; women have always been active, constructive and essential in the creation and maintenance of our nation's institutions and values. We have never been marginal or "auxiliary" to this great communal endeavor, despite the myth created by traditional history.

Women have transmitted the cultural heritage to their children of both sexes; we have created the supportive infrastructure upon which men have built economic and political institutions which allocate and distribute power; women have provided the continuity in the building of communities; we have innovated and created ways of caring for children, the sick, the handicapped, the poor; we have—in voluntary associations, clubs, and organizations—experimented with forms for social caring and for humanizing our communities. Women have always worked for self-support and the support of family members; we have worked in the lowest paying and the lowest status jobs outside the home and we have worked without pay, for love, within the homes. Throughout most of our history we have done both jobs at once,

assuming women's double burden. Women have always struggled for their own emancipation, for communal solutions to social problems, for equality of opportunity and equality of rights for themselves and other oppressed groups. In the long course of our history we have bonded together with other women, although often divided by barriers of race, class, ethnicity, and religion, yet always reaching out for sisterhood and common striving for autonomy.

All of this is the content of women's history, all of this is the lost heritage of every woman. It is also and must be, the heritage of every man, for the lack of knowledge about the past of women distorts our concepts of the present and the future.

Women's history, then, is an effort to counteract the androcentric bias of selection in the recording and interpretation of the past. Women's history seeks to uncover and recover the lost and ignored experiences, thoughts and wisdom of women of the past and return to contemporary women the heritage of which they have been deprived. Women's history is a strategy, an angle of vision, by which we try not only to find the obscured data about the past of women, but ways in which to order and interpret the facts we uncover from a woman-centered point of view. Women's history challenges the concept of the marginality of women with the understanding that women have always been actively engaged in and essential to the work of building societies and that we have functioned in patriarchal society throughout history on *our own terms*.

The first theoretical challenge of women's history to traditional history is that women have a history, as I have just discussed. The second challenge is how to think about women as a group.

Are women part of the anonymous in history? Are they oppressed in the same way that racial or class or ethnic groups have been oppressed? Are they marginal and akin in most respects to minorities? Are they simply *there* and are we talking about women every time we talk about people?

Women are part of the anonymous in history, but unlike them they have always been part of the ruling elites. Women have always been subordinated to men, at times oppressed, but not quite like either racial or ethnic groups. Some women have been exploited, but not quite like lower class groups. Women are not in the minority, although they have been treated as if they were members of minority groups. Women appear in each class and rank of society and they share, through the connection they have

with males of their family group, the fate and values and aspirations of their class or race or ethnic group. But they also experience something else, as women. Unlike other groups which have a group identity and common group interests, women frequently are divided by interests of class, race or religion from other women. No other group with a common experience has ever been so thoroughly divided within itself. Racial minority groups sometimes divide along lines of class, but their membership in the group provides a much stronger sense of identity for the individual than it does in the case of women. Women are *essentially* different from all the categories we have discussed. We have not yet really solved the problems of defining women as a separate category, but it can be suggested that the key to understanding women's place in history is in accepting that theirs is the history of half of humankind, at times of the majority.

Women are half of humankind. Women are a sex. These are the two overriding determinants of women's historical experience. Because women are a sex they are represented in every stratum of every class, race, ethnic and economic group, sharing with these groups some common interests. Because women are a sex, they are often more closely tied to members of the other sex by kinship ties, by physical association, and by the common interests in the rearing of children, than they are to members of their own sex. This is not to say that there is not a strong and demonstrable tradition of female bonding, affinity and association, but it is one which has to counteract the other structural ties women have with men. It is in the control of women's sexual function, as in the control of motherhood, that much of their subordination to men has been expressed. The history of the way in which women's sexual function has been controlled by men, or groups of men, or the state, belongs in the historical record as much as does the story of labor or race relations.

What about the argument that we are talking about women, even if we do not mention them, that women are to be subsumed under the generic term "man" or "mankind?" "Women are people, therefore every time we talk about people, we talk about women." This is never true, not in everyday speech, not in history. Because of the androcentric bias underlying the categories by which past events are ordered, we lose women from the historical record, if we do not specifically pay attention to them in the questions we ask. *i.e.* we tell the story of wars by focusing on the activities of men; the battles, the military, the economic and political activities of men. No one would seriously maintain that any war in history

could have been won without the supporting activities of women, but because we do not focus on them we lose them from the historical record. Thus we get a picture of a world in which women appear not to have existed at all. The third challenge of women's history to traditional history is the need to add new questions to those asked by traditional history in order to elicit information about women.

Relations among the sexes, both within the family and outside of it, must be added to other categories when discussing social and economic relations in any given period. The regulation of sexuality, both male and female is a major means, if not *the* major means, of social control. One of its features, historically, is that everywhere women's sexuality has been controlled and regulated by men or male-dominated institutions while the reverse has never been the case. The new family history has already begun to enrich our knowledge by studying shifts in power relations within the family and by exploring attitudes and values in regard to sexuality as aspects of ideology and power relations.

Another important new question concerns gender, the cultural definition of behavior defined as appropriate to each sex. These definitions change with time and place. The study of such changes is part of women's history and should become part of all history. Another way of saying this, is to say, that sex and gender should be added to class, race, ethnicity, religion as analytical categories in historical studies.

Fourth, *women's history challenges the traditional periodization of history*. Traditional history is periodized according to wars, conquests, revolutions, and/or vast cultural and religious shifts. All of these categories are appropriate to the major activities of men, especially political men. What historians of women's history have learned is that such periodization distorts our understanding of the history of women.

Events that advance the position of men in society, adding to their economic opportunities, their liberties and their social standing, frequently have the opposite effect on women. Thus, recent studies of the Renaissance have shown that this period, in which men have experienced an unfolding of opportunity and knowledge, was one in which women were subject to greater restraints and restrictions than they had experienced during earlier centuries. The fact that a few upper-class women occupied positions usually reserved for men in no way contradicts these findings. In the United States, the American Revolution and the political and economic changes of the age of Jackson affected

American women in a similar way. Opportunities for education and upward mobility for men coincided with the exclusion of women from such advances. Professionalization of medicine and law had the effect on women of excluding them for almost a century from professional life. The political rights gained by large groups of white men, hitherto excluded from voting and representation by property restrictions, resulted only in widening the gap between the opportunities afforded men and those afforded women in society. Women were now excluded by law, not only as formerly by custom, from voting and representation. This fact was clearly perceived by middle-class women and was one of the prime motivation forces of the woman's rights movement.

Similarly, early capitalism, in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in the United States during the late eighteenth century, freed masses of men from economic deprivation and from the struggle for mere survival, enabling them to consider liberty, opportunity, and upward mobility as something belonging to them by right. For women, this development could not take place until they could be freed from the biological necessity of producing as many children as they were capable of producing in order to guarantee that some would survive. The preconditions for this decisive development were improved medical knowledge and distribution of services, such as improved sanitation, which would lower infant morality and lower the risk of death in childbirth. Modernization helped to create these preconditions for woman's emancipation, but they benefited women of different classes at different times: European middle-class women in the eighteenth century, American white middle-class women in the nineteenth century, and lower-class and black women in the twentieth. Only when the preconditions for women's emancipation exist, can women aspire to self-fulfillment and upward mobility apart from their reproductive function. The technical means of fertility control were available to women throughout historical time, although such means were often brutal and dangerous. Yet on the mass level, women's ability to have impact on fertility rates depended on changing societal attitudes and needs. This happened at a different period than did the "Renaissance" of men. It is worth noting in passing that only after this period does woman's indoctrination to motherhood as a lifelong and primary function become oppressive, a partriarchal cultural myth.

The fifth and most basic challenge of women's history concerns the need for a redefinition of categories and values. Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of

men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centered terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women. To rectify this and to light up areas of historical darkness we must, for a time, focus on a woman-centered inquiry, considering the possibility of the existence of a female culture within the general culture shared by men and women. History must include an account of the female experience over time and should include the developments of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of women's past. This is the primary task of women's history. The central question it raises is: What would history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define?

When the historian adopts such a stance, even as a temporary strategy, the darkness of history lifts and the historical experience of women becomes visible, different from that of men and yet integrally a part of it. This can be seen in looking at women's work. Women have always done and still do two kinds of work—work for pay and unpaid service. In the marketplace women's work has been characterized by marginality, temporariness, and low status. This has resulted in their predominance in low-paying job categories, being last hired, first fired, and in the persistence of wage and salary differentials which disadvantage working women. The other work of women, that which society defined as their "main" work—housework and child-rearing—has remained financially unrewarded and historically invisible.

But child-rearing is an essential economic and social function without which no society exists. The multitude of economic and social services performed by the household are indispensable to the ability of men to perform wage labor. In a male-centered value system we only call work that which is performed for wages, thereby obliterating from consideration and view the work performed by most women. Why has there never been a history of housework? Why have we only in the past five years had work done on the history of child-rearing? A woman-centered approach would deal with such questions and would, for example, insist that any history written about the Civil War or World War II must include an account of the work of women at the front or on the home front.

Women also have shaped history through community building. While men conquered territory and built institutions which managed and distributed power, women transmitted culture to the young and built the social network and infrastructures that

provide continuity in the community.

A typical pattern would be that women perceived a social or community need, began to meet it in practical, unstructured ways, then continued to expand their efforts into building a small institution, often financed by funds they raised through voluntary activities. Thus, women built orphanages, homes for wayward children, old-age homes, kindergartens, libraries in community after community. Usually, when the institution had existed long enough and established itself, it became incorporated, registered, licensed, possibly taken over as a community institution. At that point it would usually be taken over by a male board of directors. It would also—incidentally—enter history, its official status making of its records historical sources. The women who had done the work, if they appeared in the record at all, would be visible only as a ladies' auxiliary group or as unpaid, unrecognized volunteers. A woman-centered inquiry can elicit this hidden story in community after community, and lead us to a new and different understanding of the history of our society. Voluminous records are available in every locality, but the essential research and monographic work have yet to be done.

Women's history is a strategy necessary to enable us to see around the cultural blinders which have distorted our vision of the past to the extent of obliterating from view the past of half of humankind. For these reasons, women's history poses a final, most serious challenge to scholarship and societal values. It demands a fundamental reevaluation of the assumptions and methodology of traditional history and traditional thought. It challenges the traditional assumption that man is the measure of all that is significant, and that the activities pursued be men are by definition significant, while those pursued by women are subordinate in importance. It challenges the notion that civilization is that which men have created, defended, and advanced while women had babies and serviced families and to which they, occasionally and in a marginal way, "contributed."

What we call civilization has been built by men and women. Women have, throughout historical time, been excluded from the creation of symbol systems, while all the time they have been sharing, with men, the work of the world and the building of civilization. The causes of this sexual inequality are ancient, complex, and historically determined. The various factors that thousands of years ago made such a sexual division of labor necessary, have long been superseded. Women, as well educated as men, are challenging the one-sided view of life and the world

which our androcentric civilization offers us as absolute truth. We are saying that our side of truth has not been told and now must be seen. That our historical experience must no longer remain unrecorded and our talents must no longer be predetermined as being suitable for one kind of activity rather than for another, solely because of our sex.

It is here that theoretical content and practical application intersect. As administrators of educational institutions, as teachers of the young and those returning to education at a later stage of life, we impact on life decisions, career aspirations, even on the psychological state of our students by the kind of world view we present to them. For women education has traditionally meant learning to enter a world of intellectual constructs made by men expressed in symbols controlled by men and arranged in systems and frameworks to the creation of which women were marginal. For women students, becoming educated has first and foremost meant learning to think like men and aspire to the goals and modes of living formed by men. Today, educated women and women students are challenging this process and demanding, as men did in the Renaissance, the right to be at the center of the human enterprise—the right to define, the right to decide. Women are asking for autonomy and self-definition. In historical studies, this means a paradigm shift. Women are challenging educators to end the distorted, one-sided view of civilization that history academies have called universal. The kind of transformation needed cannot be satisfied by adding a women's studies department or center, minimally funding and hedging it in with bureaucratic restrictions which inevitably marginalize it from its inception. It cannot be satisfied by adding a few courses with the word "women" in the title, nor by adding a few women-oriented titles to bibliographies. These things have to be done, of course, but let us not assume that they are truly an answer to the intellectual rights of women. Administrators and educators must take the leadership in understanding that a thorough transformation of curricula, of approaches, of attitudes is needed in order to bring the by now larger half of our student body away from marginality into the center of our educational enterprise.

The task is enormous, the challenge is inevitable and will not fade away. Intellectually, the process is revitalizing and invigorating. Women's studies is the cutting edge of a cultural transformation which will enrich the intellectual and actual lives of men and women now and in the future. Women's history is women's right.

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Conference Recommendations

The consensus of the conference is that insofar as the traditional pattern of liberal education does not take adequate account of the values, accomplishments, lives, and perspectives of half the human race, it is illiberal. Recognizing that women, as a subject of study, are peripheral in all academic disciplines, this conference calls for this situation to be reviewed, challenged, and corrected. Moreover, it is the expectation of this conference that feminist scholarship in all branches of learning will be enabled to make its impact on the development of a more truly liberal education.

This conference finds the twin intellectual efforts of research on women and the new feminist, or women-centered scholarship, both valid and powerful. Research on women results in the discovery of information and materials on women's lives, accomplishments, and culture which can be added to our existing knowledge; its goals are to integrate the new findings into the curriculum and present a truer, more complete understanding of human experience. The new feminist scholarship, which examines a topic or discipline from the points of view of both men *and women*, can modify and transform the assumptions, values, and methodologies of given areas of study by accommodating the perspectives and concerns of the heretofore invisible half of the human race. The conference strongly validates both efforts. Together they are capable of significantly renewing and humanizing liberal education.

Revitalized by these means, liberal education is a goal for all students, both female and male. It is inaccurate to judge a curriculum informed by women's, as well as men's views of reality, as beneficial mainly to women students; such a curriculum is important for students of both sexes. As offered in single-sex institutions (including women's colleges) and in institutions granting degrees to both men and women, the traditional liberal arts curriculum is male-oriented, reflecting the cultural biases and thought-patterns primarily of men, and based, for the most part, on data involving male authors, artists, political figures, psychological subjects, *et al.* In both educational settings, the curriculum is in need of profound change toward the goal of enabling

men and women to understand that the history, concerns, values, and perspectives of women—and not merely those of "exceptional" women who fit into male categories on male terms—are as valid and valuable as those of men. The goal is a more truly liberating pattern of education which fosters the greater humanity of all.

To these ends the conference makes the following specific recommendations to the American educational community.

To Institutions:

The conference recommends that serious attention be given on all American campuses to the implications for liberal learning of research on women and the new feminist scholarship.

Specifically, each institution should:

- review its curriculum in relation to the 11 "understandings" presented by Professor Howe (p. 12), assess needs, and determine resources to make needed changes.
- reevaluate, modify, and reinterpret the traditional goals and modes of liberal education and reassess criteria for selection of course materials and degree requirements.
- study models of modified and transformed curricula elsewhere and work to shape its curricula as appropriate to its own institutional modes and purposes.
- strive to build a faculty who understand that responsible teaching includes assimilating the new scholarship on women in their fields, and who, in addition, are capable of teaching a curriculum informed by feminist scholarship.

To Administrators:

Chief executive and academic officers, within their own educational environments, should:

- cultivate a campus environment which encourages openness to questions raised by research on women and the new feminist scholarship.
- educate the governing board and other institutional constituents, for instance the alumni/ae, as to the validity and importance of these intellectual endeavors for the institution's mission and purposes.
- institute procedures on campus to stimulate debate on questions raised by the new scholarship and to support and validate the efforts of those on campus who are already engaged in the new research.
- use discretionary funds to aid curricular modification and

transformation, noting the need for adequate library and faculty development monies in particular.

- support the use of sabbatical leaves and faculty and program development funds for a) research on women and feminist scholarship and b) the shaping of transformed courses.
- support team-teaching and cross-disciplinary colloquia and research projects where these may be appropriate to the accomplishment of the goal of balancing and transforming the curriculum.

To Education Associations:

The conference recommends that the Association of American Colleges seek connections with other Washington-based education associations, including the co-sponsors of this conference, for the purpose of interpreting to their constituencies the importance of the new scholarship on women for the curricula of all types of educational institutions.

Specifically, the education associations, separately and cooperatively, as appropriate, should:

- serve as resources to their members for evaluative materials and information about transformed curricula, developing ties for this purpose, as appropriate, with the National Women's Studies Association.
- foster discussion of the new curricular goals and the means to their accomplishment at workshops, conferences, and sessions at annual meetings.
- consider how their own educational activities might be modified in line with the foregoing recommendations to other educational institutions.

To Disciplinary Groups:

While recognizing that the new feminist scholarship is interdisciplinary in that it attempts to interpret a whole human experience, the conference nonetheless recommends that means be found to undertake a high-level critique of the traditional academic disciplines in relation to the new scholarship in each field. Further, the conference calls on the American Council of Learned Societies or the National Academy of Sciences to sponsor a meeting of feminist and non-feminist disciplinary leaders for the purpose of issuing a national report. Such a report would assess what has been discovered in the disciplines individually and collectively, what research still needs to be done, and what are the

most effective means of modifying the teaching in given areas and of transforming the undergraduate curriculum as a whole.

This report, moreover, should recommend that graduate departments and research institutions examine the adequacy of their programs of graduate training in light of the new scholarship on women. Disciplinary organizations should support graduate departments in the training of instructors who are competent to teach a curriculum informed by the new research.

The Wingspread Conference on the Role of Women's Studies in Liberal Education: Issues and Constraints in Curricular Change

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